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The effects and nature of voluntary counselling and testing for HIV and AIDS in South Africa as experienced by the counsellor.

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Abstract

This research represents the culmination of approximately two years of investigation into the nature and experience of counselling for HIV and Aids in South Africa. Over this time, the researcher engaged with Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) counsellors across Gauteng province, South Africa, to gain insight into the practical as well as the psychological aspects of their counselling experiences. Numerous facets of the counselling experience are explored. The demographic descriptors of the responding sample were used to elicit a profile of the typical VCT counsellor. Additionally, counsellors' personal motivations for entry into the field, as well as training experiences and the procedures they adopt when counselling were investigated. An essential strand of the research involves the subsequent exploration of counsellors' perceptions regarding the work that they do. Finally, the research presents reflections on one of the emergent issues raised in the results- power dynamics and their influence on the experience of counselling for HIV and Aids. A reflexive review was included in the findings of this study in order to provide the reader with an insight into the researcher's emotional and cognitive experience of conducting this study. The study represents a valuable endeavour in refining current understandings of VCT counselling practice and experience.